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An Earneſt and Affectionate

ADDRESS

TO

YOUNG PERSONS,

Of various

CHARACTERS:

IN A

SERMON,

Delivered *Jan.* 1, 1756. at *Silver-Street.*

To which is added,

A ſhort ADDRESS to PARENTS and HEADS of FAMILIES.

By S. HAYWARD.

Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, Eccl. xii. 1.
Wilt thou not from this Time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the Guide of my Youth? Jer. iii. 4.
For I know him that he will command his Children and his Houſhold after him, Gen. xviii. 19.

LONDON:

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BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

THE following Sermon was, I hope, delivered from the Pulpit, with a ſincere Deſire of bringing ſome unthinking Youths to the great REDEEMER, to encourage others in their Purſuits of Heaven, and ſtrengthen their Hands, and animate their Souls amidſt the various Difficulties of the preſent fluctuating State. At the Requeſt of many who heard it, I have ventured to ſend it into the World. Whatever Reception it may meet with from ſome; whatever Reproaches may be caſt upon the Author, and his feeble Attempt to advance the dear SAVIOUR's Intereſt; if he may but command a divine Bleſſing upon it, ſo as to lead ſome wandering Youth to himſelf, it will be anſwering a valuable Purpoſe, and will lay a Foundation for Rejoicing and Praiſe ——Souls are Jewels of ineſtimable Worth, and therefore we ſhould be laborious and earneſt in the Purſuit of their Salvation. The Cauſe of Religion has been dying for ſome Years. Whenever it revives, we may expect it will begin with young People. Let me intreat you, therefore, who are in the Dawn of Life, and into whoſe Hands this Sermon may fall, to read it with Care; at the ſame Time looking up to GOD for his SPIRIT to enable you to weigh every Article in it, to impreſs its Importance upon your Minds, and help you, with fixed Reſolutions, to purſue the vaſt Concerns of Immortality. And, as this Diſcourſe was deſigned more particularly for you, who uſually attend upon my poor Miniſtrations, as a Teſtimony of my tender

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der Regard for your precious Souls; ſo, I ſhould rejoice to hear that it was made effectual to captivate your Hearts with a View of the amiable SAVIOUR, *to quicken your Diligence in the Way to* Zion, *and to adminiſter but the leaſt Encouragement to you in your* ſeeking the LORD.——*You have my daily and earneſt Prayers for your everlaſting Welfare: And I ſhall never eſteem my Labour too much, or think I ſpend my Strength in vain, if you receive but ſome ſpiritual Advantage, and are but making ſome Advances in the Chriſtian Life.*

This Sermon I choſe to put in the Form of an Addreſs, thinking it might the more engage Attention, but not expecting the leaſt Succeſs from it, unleſs GOD *was to give his Bleſſing. All the Exhortations I uſe in it, all the Arguments I endeavour to preſs upon young and tender Minds, are only Means, which if* GOD *is pleaſed to ſmile upon, the wiſhed for Change will be made. As he has appointed Means, and makes them effectual to bring about his gracious and everlaſting Purpoſes; I eſteem it my Duty to uſe theſe Means; but, I hope, only conſidering them as ſuch, and looking therefore to a ſuperior Power to make them ſtriking, quickning, and ſaving. The ſame Bleſſing, I truſt, I was enabled to intreat upon this Sermon, when delivered from the Pulpit, I now would as earneſtly implore may accompany the Reading of it, that ſome Glory may be brought to that* MEDIATOR, *to whom I would chearfully devote all my Strength, and the Advancement of whoſe Kingdom I hope would be my greateſt Joy in Life and Death.*

Bunhill-Row,
Jan. 19, 1756.

S. HAYWARD.

PROV. viii. 17.—latter Part.

And they that ſeek me early ſhall find me.

OF all the Perſons, that GOD takes Notice of in his Word, thoſe in the *Bloom* of *Life* are ſome of the *firſt*. To *theſe* the Word of Salvation is particularly ſent: To *theſe* the greateſt Encouragements are every where given; and *theſe*, when effectually called, the great Shepherd has made his more immediate Care and Charge. What a Mark of Diſtinction was put upon ABIJAH, the *Son* of *Jeroboam*, for his early Piety? *He only of Jeroboam ſhall come to the Grave, becauſe in him there is found ſome good Thing toward the LORD GOD of Iſrael, in the Houſe of Jeroboam.* 1 Kings, xiv. 13. The *Youth* that run to CHRIST, and kneeling, aſk'd him, what he ſhould do that he might inherit eternal Life, appeared in ſome Reſpects lovely in the Eyes of the SAVIOUR, for thoſe amiable Diſpoſitions he obſerved in him. *Youth* is the Time, when GOD generally

begins a Work of Grace in the Heart, and proclaims Liberty to captive Souls. Whoever find Acceſs to, and Acceptance with him, thoſe who have devoted their *earlieſt Days* to his Service, ſhall be honour'd with ſuch Privileges. *I love them that love me*, therefore, ſays the glorious SAVIOUR. He will honour and eſteem all who eſteem him; but he takes more particular Notice of *young Perſons*, and promiſes, that *they that ſeek him early ſhall find him.* The Word here tranſlated *ſeek early*, ſignifies to * *riſe timely in the Morning and to ſeek diligently.* Thus *Job* vii. 21. *Thou ſhalt ſeek me in the Morning.* The Noun ſignifies *Morning*, Gen. xix. 15. and by a Metaphor ſignifies *Youth*, Ecc. xi. 10. Thus, thoſe who ſeek Chriſt *early*, are ſuch as ſeek him in the *Morning of their Days*, in the *Beginning*, the *Dawn* of Life. And as the Word, to compleat its Senſe, points out † *Diligence* in ſeeking; ſo it ſignifies, that *young Perſons* ſhould ſeek the LORD with the *utmoſt Care* and *Earneſtneſs*: Attend to it as a Matter of everlaſting Importance, and not of a trifling Nature.

Thus *you* who are in the *Bloom* of Life, *ſeek the LORD*; the LORD CHRIST. *He* is the Perſon who invites you. *He* whoſe *Name* ſhould be ever held in *Veneration* by ſinful Man, he it is who calls you.—— *Seek* an *Intereſt* in this deſpiſed JESUS; in *him*, who was *crucified without the Gates of Jeruſalem*, but is now ‡ *exalted on high*. *Seek* an *Acquaintance* with him, *whom* § *to*

* *Leigh's* crit. ſac. † *Prov.* xi. 27. ‡ *Phil.* ii. 8. 9.
§ *John* xvii. 3.

know

know is eternal Life. *Seek* his *Spirit*, to dwell in you, to renew and ſanctify you, and fit you for dwelling with him in the heavenly Manſions. *Seek* after his *Righteouſneſs*, to be array'd with that *ſpotleſs Robe*, which he has provided, that *wedding Garment*, which is abſolutely neceſſary to recommend you to GOD.—*Seek* his *amiable Temper*, that you may be like him in all Things, and ſo may ſhine as Lights before Men. *Seek* his *Preſence* in Duties and Difficulties. *Seek* his *Glory* here, and to *appear* in his everlaſting *Kingdom* hereafter.—*Seek* him in the *firſt Place*. Make this your greateſt Concern in Life; and be like Perſons in good Earneſt, who are determined, if poſſible, to find that they ſeek after. *Seek* him by *Faith*. *Seek* him in all the *Means* and *Ordinances* he has appointed.—*Seek, and you ſhall find.* You ſhall find him *ready* to cloath you, to pardon you, to quicken you, to ſanctify and ſave you.—*Able* to do infinitely more for you, than you can either aſk or think.—*Faithful* in fulfilling all his Promiſes and Engagements, in managing all your Concerns, and in keeping that which you have committed to him againſt the great and important Day.—You ſhall find his *Preſence* in Life; find him at Death a *ſure Foundation*, a *glorious Sanctuary*; and, at the *great Day*, ready to own, and acknowledge you before his Father, and his holy Angels; you ſhall ſee him coming with a *full* and *compleat* Salvation, with a *Crown of Glory*, that fadeth not away, to make you for *ever happy* both in *Body* and *Soul*, in his immediate Preſence in Heaven.—Finally, you

ſhall find all that in him, and receive all that from him, which is neceſſary to give compleat Happineſs to an immortal Creature.——

Glorious Promiſe! bleſſed Encouragements! Words, that ſhould be *wrote* with the *Point* of a *Diamond*; that ſhould be *ſo deeply* engraven on our Hearts, as *never* to be *eraſed!*——Are not your Ears open to hear, and your Hearts to receive the glorious Tidings?——Here's every Thing promis'd, that tends to captivate your Affections. Are you ambitious of *Honours?* Here are Honours *immortal* and *exalted.* Are *Riches* the Objects of your Purſuit? Here are Riches *unſearchable*, *inconceivable.*—— Are you fond of Pleaſures? Here are Pleaſures, *refin'd* and *pure*; *Joys unſpeakable and full of Glory.* *—— What ſhall I ſay? Here's all a Creature *wants*, all a Creature can *deſire.*——Have I not then a good Foundation laid, *my dear young Friends*, for treating with you about your Souls; for *exhorting* you to ſeek after an Intereſt in the REDEEMER, for *cautioning* you againſt Sin, for *expoſtulating* with you about your Negligence, and *chiding* your Formality and Indifference? *You* are our *Hopes* of the Revival of a ſinking Intereſt, the *Objects* of our *Prayers*, and of our fondeſt Wiſhes. Our Eyes and our Hearts are upon *you.* And ſhall we be *ſlack* in importuning you to *ſeek the* LORD in your early Days? Shall we not *call* upon you, *preſs* you, *beſeech* and *encourage* you, and, by all poſſible Arguments,

* 1 *Pet.* i. 8.

endeavour

endeavour to engage you to an earneſt Purſuit of eternal Bleſſings? For this Purpoſe I appear here this Evening. I come, I hope, in my great Maſter's Name, to addreſs you upon Matters of infinite Importance. Oh, may I have your Ears, and your Hearts too! May what I have to offer, be accompanied with an Almighty Power, and be made effectual to bring you ſavingly to JESUS, that you may now cloſe with him, and give up your everlaſting All to him.——

What I have to ſay is by Way of Addreſs, ——And let me perſwade you, that, in all that may be ſaid, I have an Eye to your real Happineſs, and a ſincere Deſire after your Salvation. I have no Deſign to irritate your Paſſions, but, out of *tender Pity*, to endeavour to convince you of, and win your Attention to Things of everlaſting Moment to your Souls. GOD grant that the Word may be made effectual to anſwer theſe valuable Purpoſes, that you may receive the glorious Advantages ariſing from thence, both in this and a future World.——

I would divide thoſe who will be the Objects of the following Addreſs, into various Claſſes, and ſpeak diſtinctly to each. And,

I. The firſt I would compaſſionately take Notice of, *are thoſe unhappy Youths, who are bordering too nearly upon Infidelity and Prophaneneſs*; who have thrown off all Regard to ſacred Things, treat the great Doctrines of Chriſtianity with *Ridicule*, and the ſtrict Profeſſors of them with *Contempt*; who are ready to look upon all Religion as a mere human *Invention*, ſpend their Time in Sloth, or the

the Purſuit of every earthly Pleaſure, and are advancing with eager Haſte towards the Seat of the *Scornful*.——Some ſuch as theſe may perhaps have dropp'd into this Aſſembly, if not from a Love to Ordinances, yet out of Curioſity to hear what the *Babbler* may ſay, and to turn it into prophane Banter amongſt their gay, unthinking Companions. As you profeſs yourſelves rational Creatures, ſo I would call upon you to ſtop a Moment, nay, I demand your Attention, whilſt, from your own Mouths, I endeavour to condemn your Principles and Practice. That you believe there is a GOD, I make no Doubt. This is a Truth which univerſal Nature ſo loudly proclaims, that, however you are ſunk into Inſenſibility, you muſt *readily acknowledge*. And the ſame Principles of Reaſon, that convince you there is a GOD, ſet him forth as a GOD of infinite, ſpotleſs Perfections, and therefore as a *fit Object* of all religious *Worſhip*; repreſent *your Dependance* upon him, and conſequently the *Obligations you* are under to pay that *Worſhip* to him which is his *Due*. *See you not then, how irrationally you act*, when you endeavour to *perſwade* yourſelves that there's no Reality in Religion, when you *deny* this GOD that Obedience he demands; when you *deſpiſe* that ſacred Rule of *Worſhip* he has given you, and thoſe important Truths revealed there; when you *make Sport* at thoſe, who from Conſcience, Gratitude and Love, have devoted their Lives to the Service of JESUS; and, finally, when you ſpend your Time in *Rioting* and *Drunkenneſs*, in *Chambering* and *Wantonneſs*, in

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the Purſuit of every criminal Pleaſure, and the *Profanation* of that Day, which GOD has ſet apart for himſelf? *See you not from the ſame Principles*, the Worth of the Soul, the Certainty of a future Reckoning, and of a State of everlaſting Exiſtence after Death? And do you not ſee the *dangerous Risk* you are running, and the *Folly* you are chargeable with in your preſent unhappy Purſuits? You muſt ſtand condemn'd in the *great Day of the* LORD, by *Reaſon* and *Conſcience*, and eſpecially by the *ſuperadded Light* of *Scripture*, where you have your Duty ſet forth in all its Branches, and the greateſt Encouragements, Motives and Excitements to it given you. You are ready to eſteem yourſelves of all Perſons the moſt happy, whilſt you think you have quieted the Clamours of Conſcience, got rid of thoſe Thoughts, that have ſo often perplex'd you, and cut the very Sinews of Religion, ſo that now you can purſue your own Inclinations without Controul. But were you to ſpeak the very Truth, you muſt acknowledge, that you have yet ſuch *Remonſtrances* of Conſcience againſt your Principles and Conduct, as fill you oftentimes with ſuch an Anxiety, as *awfully forebodes* what is to come. *Ye miſtaken Souls*, you dream of Happineſs, but you are far from it; the Night is often a Terror to you, whilſt ſomething within, reſtleſs as the troubled Ocean, often ſecretly whiſpers that there is *no Peace* to the *Wicked*. I ask not *whether* this is the Caſe, I know it is, and *cannot* be otherwiſe. Thus you go on from Year to Year, *kicking againſt the Pricks*, hardening your Hearts againſt GOD, and finding Excuſes, if

poſſible

poſſible, for your ſinful Conduct, but *Strangers* to ſolid Peace and Comfort. With the juſteſt Propriety, therefore, may I call upon you to *ſeek the* LORD. I cannot leave you in this awful Condition, but muſt beſeech you by the *Mercies of* GOD, and for the Sake of your Souls, to *ſeek* an Intereſt in that JESUS, whoſe Ways are full of Pleaſure, and who can give you ſolid Peace and Happineſs both in Time and Eternity.

II. The ſecond Sort I would addreſs, and expoſtulate with, are thoſe, *who are in ſome Meaſure heſitating between two Opinions.* From the Obſervations they have made, the Checks of Conſcience, and Convictions they have had, they cannot but be *ſatisfy'd* of the Reality of Religion, and the unſpeakable Happineſs of thoſe who have an Intereſt in the REDEEMER. They *often* chide their Folly, and *wiſh* it was otherways with them; yet are almoſt doubtful what to do. *Conſcience* leads them one Way, *Company* another. *Conſcience* ſays, give up thyſelf to JESUS, in his Ways is the trueſt Happineſs; *Company* invites them to the *Card-table*, to the *Play-houſe*, *laughs* at their ſerious Appearance, and entices them to the Purſuit of thoſe Pleaſures which are ſo pernicious to an immortal Soul. They are under ſome *Uncertainty* for a Time, yet *rather inclin'd* to attend the Sollicitations of their Companions. They cannot *bear* their Reproaches, are *juſt ready* to be entangled, and are on the Verge of Ruin.

To you, *dear deluded Youths*, I would ſpeak with the utmoſt Tenderneſs and Compaſſion; and Oh! that what I may ſay, may be made effectual at once to *determine* your Reſolutions, and engage you to *ſeek the* LORD with your whole Hearts, in the Way GOD has appointed!——As Motives to ſtir you up to it, conſider—*If you ſtifle preſent Convictions, they may never return.* And though you may paſs quietly and peaceably through Life, without any particular Alarms, yet *this* is a moſt *awful Condition*, however pleaſing it may be to Nature. *Now* you cannot break the Sabbath, or run with your Companions into any Exceſs, but Conſcience will *remonſtrate* againſt ſuch a Conduct, when you are *alone*, and perhaps give you ſome painful Anxiety. But if this faithful Monitor ſhould be deſpis'd, and forbear to dicharge his important Office, Oh! *how melancholy* the Thought! To be *hardned* and *ſtupid!* To run from Sin to Sin, and from Pleaſure to Pleaſure, and *never think* of Eternity, but rather eſteem yourſelves *happy* that all is quiet! GOD deliver you from ſuch a Condition!——Conſider *how awful* it will be with you, *when Conſcience will fully Awake!* The Time *will come* when *this* will be the Caſe; Conſcience will *Awake*, and like a *roaring Lion*, ſeizing upon his Prey, tear you to Pieces. The rich Man *fared ſumptuouſly every Day*, and lived in *Eaſe* and *Security*, but at length *in Hell he lift up his Eyes being in great Torment.* Luke xvi. 19, 23. You may think to *make a Covenant* * *with*

* *If.* xxviii 15, 18

Death, and with Hell to be at an Agreement; but your Covenant with Death, ſhall be diſanulled, and your Agreement with Hell ſhall not ſtand, when the Day of the LORD's Wrath ſhall come upon you.——Will your *Companions*, when they entice you to run with them into Sin, *engage* to allay the Fury of your awakned Conſciences, to *remove* the Terrors of Death, and to *ſecure you* from ſinking into the bottomleſs Pit; or *can they do it?* Theſe Conſiderations are certainly *worth* attending to, before you *finally determine* to run with a Multitude to do Evil.——Again, is it not *better* to ſeek the *Favour* of CHRIST, and to *enjoy* real *inward Peace*, though you diſoblige your Companions by it, and fall under their ſevereſt Cenſures and Reproaches, than *go* with them the *broad Way* to everlaſting Deſtruction? *He that walketh with wiſe Men, ſhall be wiſe; but a Companion of Fools ſhall be deſtroyed.* Prov. xiii. 20. You muſt expect their Sneers, their Frowns, and their Reſentment, but will not *ſolid Peace* in *Life* and *Death*, will not a *Crown of Glory* and an *incorruptable Inheritance* above make you *ſufficient* Amends, and be an *Overballance* to all the Difficulties you meet with in the Way?—Oh! I cannot but expoſtulate with you! Methinks I ſee you under ſome *Gloom at Times*, and in a retir'd Moment crying out; "Oh! *that Eternity*, was it "not for *thee*, I ſhould have Peace: I could en-"joy my Comforts with Satisfaction as others "do. This, this is a *Sting* in all my Pleaſures, "I muſt *die* and *appear* before GOD." Is not this the Caſe? And will you ſtifle *this* Conviction?

How

How happy, *my dear young Friend*, how happy, that you have not yet got *above* a Concern for Eternity! Happy, that it *yet* comes before you! How *glad* ſhould I be to be an Inſtrument of convincing you that i'ts an *unſpeakable Mercy*, and to ſee you *attending to it* with the utmoſt Seriouſneſs! Don't endeavour to *get rid* of the important Thought. Don't *put off* the awful Day. *Cheriſh* the Conviction; believing its *Importance*, *cheriſh* it, till you find *all your Heart overcome*, and you are made willing to *give up yourſelf* entirely to JESUS. Thus you cannot ſure, *halt between two Opinions*, but ſee the *Neceſſity* and *Advantages* of *ſeeking the* LORD, the *Folly* of being *led away* by thoſe who are Enemies to a REDEEMER, and the unſpeakable *Danger* you are in, and the awful *Risk* you run in being their *Aſſociates*.

III. I would now addreſs a third Sort of young Perſons; and they are ſuch, *as acknowledge the Excellency and Importance of the Chriſtian Life*; *but think*, *as they are young*, *it is Time enough to attend to ſuch Concerns*. They purpoſe to do it, when their *Age* is more peculiarly *ſuited* to Solidity of Thought; but now *they* are in the Prime, the Bloom of Life, capable of *reliſhing* its Pleaſures; they therefore apprehend they may *purſue* its *innocent Amuſements*, whilſt they can, or take a little Satisfaction for the preſent, ſo they do but engage to *ſeek the* LORD in their more advanced Years.——Such Perſons as theſe, are deſerving of the greateſt Compaſſion, as they are under ſuch miſtaken Apprehenſions of the Chriſtian Life, ſo deluded by

Satan, and therefore in ſuch Danger of everlaſting Ruin——Permit me to tell you, that you are *greatly miſtaken in your Apprehenſions of Religion.* You are ready to entertain very unbecoming Thoughts of it, as *forbidding* every innocent Amuſement, or *depriving us* of all Pleaſure, and filling us with *perpetual Melancholy.* This is doing the *greateſt Injury* to the Cauſe of our LORD, and filling your Minds with the ſtrongeſt Prejudices againſt that, which *of all Things* is the *moſt glorious*, in the preſent Comforts it yields, and in that compleat Felicity it puts the Soul into the everlaſting Poſſeſſion of. On Union to CHRIST, you will not *loſe* all Pleaſure, but only *exchange them.* For *low*, *mean*, *ſenſual* Joys, you will have thoſe which are *exalted*, *refined*, and *glorious.* For *temporal*, you will have Joys *everlaſting.* Joys which will *enliven* you amidſt all the Difficulties of Life, and make a *dying Bed eaſy* and *pleaſant.* If you would have *Pleaſure*, therefore, let me recommend the Ways of JESUS. The Apprehenſions you have entertained, that the Chriſtian muſt be a melancholy Creature, are entirely falſe. Ask the *aged Saint*, who has travelled the Road to *Zion* for *forty*, *fifty*, *or threeſcore Years*, *what Report* he has to give of the *Ways* of GOD: Ask the *young Chriſtian* who has but juſt *begun* his Race, whether he has found no *Pleaſure*; and both will join in repreſenting the *Enjoyments* of a *ſpiritual Life*, as *far Superior* to all thoſe of a natural one——I cannot, therefore,

but

but upon the juſteſt Grounds, preſs you to *ſeek the* LORD.

You are, in general, *miſtaken as to thoſe Pleaſures, you call innocent.* You will find them in the End to be *criminal*, *enſnaring* and *deſtructive* to your Souls. Satan inſinuates the Innocency of Pleaſures into the Minds of young Perſons, that they may the more readily purſue them. Thus many have been led to the *Play-houſe*, the *firſt Step* perhaps to their Ruin. Others have ſpent Night after Night at the *Card-Table*, calling it a *harmleſs Diverſion.* By this Means all Opportunities of attending to ſpiritual Duties, have been often *taken away*, or the Heart greatly *unfitted* for them. An *Itch* for Gaming and Pleaſure has been contracted, a *Coldneſs* to the Life of Religion has enſued, a growing *Fondneſs* for preſent Things; and, if there is any Work of Grace in the Heart, it lies in a *languiſhing* Condition, and but *little* of the Chriſtian is ſeen. Such Perſons are *ſeldom Ornaments* to the Religion they profeſs. If you would but permit Conſcience to ſpeak the Truth, I apprehend I have hit the Mark. Thus the Pleaſures you would fain look upon as *innocent*, will prove your greateſt Enemies, harden your Hearts againſt GOD, and be highly prejudicial to your Souls. Sure then I cannot but invite, nay, importune you to *ſeek the* LORD, in doing of which you will find the greateſt Pleaſures, and the richeſt Advantages.

Again,

Again, It is a Temptation of the moſt dangerous Nature you are under, *viz. To put off the Concerns of Eternity to ſome future* Time. The *longer* you continue Strangers to the Power of Religion, the *more Indifferent* and Cold you will be to it. Every Act of Sin ſets you at a greater Diſtance from GOD, and the Time may come, when you will find, by Experience, that awful Truth, *Jer.* xiii. 23. *That the* Ethiopian *can as ſoon change his Skin, and the Leopard his Spots, as you, who have been accuſtomed to do Evil, learn to do well*——But you know not that your *Lives may be ſpared another Year*, nay, *another Day*. No Truth is more evident than that of the Uncertainty of Life. *Boaſt not thyſelf of a To-morrow, for thou knoweſt not what a Day may bring forth*, Prov. xxvii. 1.——You may preſume upon many Years to come; but don't you ſee this as a *Deluſion* of Satan? Can you be ſo unthinking as to *ſwallow* the Bait? Do you never ſee the *Deceit*, when many equally healthy, young and vigorous as you, are *ſuddenly* ſnatch'd from all their dear Enjoyments, and fixed for ever in a World altogether unknown? How often do you embrace the pleaſing Thought, that you have Years to come, to roll away in Pleaſure, when behold *this Night your Souls may be required at your Hands!* Let me intreat you therefore to *ſeek the* LORD in theſe your early Days, that, if Death ſhould ſuddenly call you from the preſent World, you may have an *Entrance adminiſtered unto you into the everlaſting Kingdom of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST.

IV. A fourth Sort I would addreſs, are thoſe who are kept from *outward Abominations*, nay, who have them in *Deteſtation*. They are *ſober*, and, to Appearance, go *regularly* through a Courſe of Duty.——All this is amiable, *my dear young Friend*, and doubtleſs recommends you to the Eſteem of thoſe with whom you Converſe. It is a great Pleaſure to ſee any *young Perſons* in the *preſent degenerate Day*, of virtuous Diſpoſitions. But remember, you may look upon publick notorious Sins with *Indignation*, may be *ſober* in your Behaviour, and *regular* in your Attendance upon Duties, and yet, like the young Man in the Goſpel, who thought he had kept every Command, be under the *real Power* of Sin.——From your *conſtant Sobriety*, you may not be ready to ſuſpect your being but *almoſt Chriſtians*; eſpecially when you view the Immoralities of others, but conclude, that you muſt *certainly* have an *Intereſt* in the Favour of GOD. *Here* lies your greateſt Danger. Many, like the fooliſh Virgins, cry *Peace, Peace*, concluding all is well, when the everlaſting Gates will be ſhut againſt them, and they meet with an awful Diſappointment.—— Oh! *my dear Friends*, I *rejoyce* that any of you are ſober, and have been ſo from your earlieſt Days; but I would be *jealous* over you with a godly Jealouſy. I dare not *Prophecy ſmooth Things* to you, or *daub with untemper'd Mortar*. I dare not lull you to Security, or give you the pleaſing Expectation of eternal Life, if you have only the *Form* of Godlineſs. Let me intreat you to be

upon

upon your Guard. 'Tis not enough, *thou lovely Youth*, indeed it is not enough that thou art no *Drunkard*, no *Whoremonger*; that thou art *moderate* in the Uſe of thy Enjoyments, and *regular* in thy Obſervance of the *Externals* of Religion. Enquire, for *thy Souls ſake*, for CHRIST's *ſake*, enquire into the *Vitals*, the *Eſſentials* of Chriſtianity. Carefully examine what it is that *conſtitutes* the Chriſtian. See, whether thou haſt been enabled to *ſeek the* LORD JESUS with thy Heart, in the *firſt Place*. See, that thou art concern'd to be *like him*, to have his *Spirit in thee*, to be *cloath'd* with his *Righteouſneſs*, and to be *vitally united* to him. See, that thy Hope be not the *Hope* of the *Hypocrite*, and that thou art not a *Stranger* to that *Purity of Heart*, which is abſolutely neceſſary to our Enjoyment of GOD, and don't be *puff'd up* with Pride as the Phariſee, or *place* thy *Dependance* upon an outward Show.——

V. I would now particularly take Notice of thoſe *who are the Children of religious Parents*.—— Your Privileges are peculiarly *great*. Yet, Perſons in *ſuch Circumſtances*, are *not* always the moſt *eminent* for real Godlineſs. How many have had the greateſt *Advantages* from Examples, Prayers, religious Inſtructions, and, in Conſequence of theſe, have been under *early Convictions*, and yet have turn'd out the *greateſt Apoſtates*? How many *deſpiſe* their religious Parents, and eſteem every Thing that comes from them, of a ſerious Nature, a Burthen?——Have *you* been favour'd with ſuch important Bleſſings? Have

you

you heard your pious Relatives, *committing you* with the utmoſt Affection, into the Hands of GOD, pleading for your Souls, and *inſtructing* you in the great Principles and Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and are you not *yet convinced*, of the Importance of Religion; not yet *ſetting* your Faces *Zion* wards? Nay, do any of you behave *unkindly* to your *dear Parents?* Do you *turn your Backs* upon their friendly Admonitions, and *think* the Duties they ſo earneſtly, and ſo affectionately preſs you to, a *needleſs Severity?* Melancholy Caſe!——Some of you have *loſt* theſe faithful friendly Monitors. They are welcomed into the Joy of their LORD. No more then will you *enjoy* the Opportunities you have had, of *hearing* of JESUS and Salvation from *their Mouths.* No more will they *admoniſh*, *inſtruct*, and *pray* for you. They are gone for ever. And are *you* their *Children*, and not *filling up* their Places. They in *Heaven*, and you not *one Foot* in the Path thither! Your *Privileges* thus awfully *abridged*, and you not alarmed at it! Sure, *it is high Time to awake!* Conſider, conſider before it is too late. One would imagine, the *Thought* of their *Removal* ſhould ſtartle and rouze you, and put you upon ſeeking to prepare to *meet them* at the great and important Day.

Again, *Some of you have the Enjoyment of your Parents ſtill.* GOD, in ſparing their Lives, has *continued* your Advantages a little longer. You *yet hear* of a SAVIOUR, have Opportunities of *ſocial Prayer*, and often hear *yourſelves men-*

tioned at a Throne of Grace. And is this a *Confinement?* Do you wiſh for a *Releaſe?* When they are gone, what a *Calamity* will this be upon you! Oh, *dread* the Day, when you ſhall get from under the watchful Eye of theſe *tender Relatives!* What think you will be the *Conſequence?* You will fall an *eaſy Prey* to the Temptations of Satan, and an enſnaring World; you will *run* with every enticing Sinner, and, unleſs Grace prevents, may *turn out* the greateſt *Apoſtates*, and be made *Monuments*, *publick* Monuments of divine Vengeance. I would fain perſuade myſelf, that theſe Privileges are not loſt upon *you* all.——Don't you *begin* to think it *Time* to attend to their Inſtructions?——What can they have in *View* but your real Welfare? What do their blubbering Lips, their throbbing Hearts, their ſecret Sighs *declare*, but a *Mind deeply concerned* for your Salvation? Why look they ſo mournfully upon you, but to ſee you *Strangers* to JESUS? Why ſo wiſhfully, but to have you *Heirs* with them of eternal Life? It wounds their tender Souls, when they ſee your *Hardneſs* of *Heart*, your *Blindneſs*, your *Obſtinacy*. It gives them the greateſt Anguiſh, when they conſider the *Danger* you are in.——Can they ſee you liable to be tore from them, and ſentenced to the bottomleſs Pit, without *weeping*, *pleading*, *ſighing?* Can they ſee the Sword drawn, the Storm gathering, and ready to fall upon your Heads, and be *ſilent?* What moved *David*, that Man after God's own Heart, at the Death of *Abſalom?* Was it the *Loſs* of his *Company?* No: It

was

was a *Fear* of his *everlaſting Miſery*. This made the Royal Prophet weep; and, as he went up to the Chamber, cry out, *Oh! my Son* Abſalom, *my Son, my Son* Abſalom; *would* GOD *I had died for thee, Oh* Abſalom, *my Son, my Son*, 2 Sam. xviii. 33.——Can you now blame your Parents for their tender Concern? Shall not this rather *endear* them to you, and make you deſirous of hearkning to their Petitions, of *ſeeking the* LORD, and not bring their grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave?——I cannot take my Leave of you, without doing all I can to convince and impreſs you. See, *every Thing* calls upon you to awake: *Friends, Mercies, Gratitude*, your *Souls*, a *thouſand Ties* and *Obligations* call upon you to attend to the Things that belong to your everlaſting Peace. How awful then will it be, after all to be found Strangers and Enemies to the REDEEMER! GOD grant, that I may be an Inſtrument of opening your Eyes, that you may henceforward prize your Privileges, honour your dear Parents, and begin *to ſeek the* LORD in good Earneſt.——

VI. I would addreſs thoſe *who are under ſerious Impreſſions, ſee* themſelves *Sinners, loſt*, and *wretched*, and deſire to be *directed* in the Way that leads to *Life everlaſting*.

To you, *my dear Friends*, our Text ſpeaks the greateſt Encouragement. Are you not deſirous to *ſeek the* LORD in his *own appointed Way?* Deſirous of taking CHRIST as your *All?* Would you be juſtified and ſaved by him? *Seek*

then, and you ſhall *find*. The Promiſe is *ſure*, and ſtands for your *Encouragement*. Nay, the whole Goſpel encourages you to ſeek and come to JESUS for Salvation. View the glorious Proclamation, *Iſ.* lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price.* Hear what the REDEEMER himſelf ſays, with what Affection and Compaſſion he calls, and what an Aſſurance he gives of Acceptance, *Matt.* xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that Labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Reſt.* And *John* vi. 37. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*——You have no Reaſon to entertain the leaſt uneaſy Doubt, as if there was no Pardon, or Salvation for you. Will not CHRIST receive thoſe that give him the *Dew of their Youth?* Will he refuſe Salvation to thoſe who *ſeek it early? Who* made you willing to give up yourſelves to him? *Who* has given you *this Thirſt* after ſaving Bleſſings? Is it not GOD? And will he not *ſatisfy* your thirſty Souls? *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled*, Matt. v. 6. See, JESUS ſtands ready to welcome you to his Heart, to his Salvation. *Lift up the Hands then that hang down, and confirm the feeble Knees.* Come and leave yourſelves with the REDEEMER. Bleſs him, that he has opened your Eyes; and be not diſcouraged, for you are the Perſons he has pointed out, as the Objects of his Favour.—*They that ſeek him early ſhall find him.*

You

You might expect, perhaps, that I ſhould ſtop here, but I am bound by a Variety of Ties and Engagements, to take particular Notice of thoſe, *whom* GOD *has put more peculiarly under my Care.*——And how ſhall I ſpeak? What ſhall I ſay unto you? How pleaſing would it be, had I but any Ground to think, that you who have attended my poor Labours the laſt Year, were *all ſetting your Faces Zion wards!* But, *is it ſo?* I muſt ask you the important Queſtion, *is it ſo?* If I know my own Heart, I long for your Salvation: If I miſtake not, I ſhould rejoice to ſee CHRIST *formed in you*, to ſee you wearing his glorious Image, and preſſing towards eternal Life. I doubt ſome are *yet* unconcerned. Some of you have ſtifled Convictions, and are *ſtill unwilling* to come to JESUS. Don't diſown the Truth, awful as it is, but acknowledge it; and Oh! that GOD would ſend an Arrow to your Hearts this Evening, and glorify his Grace in your Salvation! Would it not be your *Parents Joy* to ſee you determined to be the Followers of the LAMB? Would it not *revive* the Hearts of the *Church*, to hear that you were *ſetting out* in the Road to Heaven? Would it not ſtrengthen the Hands of a *poor Labourer*, who deſires to *think nothing too much*, if he may but be an *Inſtrument* of promoting your everlaſting Happineſs? Shall I appear as a *ſwift Witneſs* againſt you in the awful Day of Accounts? Muſt I then ſtand up, and ſay, —— "LORD, *this* and *that* young "Perſon did not want for *Inſtructions*, *Admoni-* "*tions*, *Cautions*, *Exhortations*, and *Intreaties*. "I told them their *Danger*; I beſeeched them to

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" *conſider* their everlaſting Concerns, but they " *hearkned not to the Counſel* that was given them; " they *turned their Backs* upon every Reproof; " now therefore *laugh at their Calamity, and mock* " *now their Fear cometh.*"---Think of the *Opportunities* you have to give an Account of, and how awful for us to have ſuch a *Meeting!* Muſt I therefore *pray*, and *preach* in vain? Oh! *ſeek the* LORD. Was this *to be my laſt Opportunity* of ſpeaking to you on Earth, this ſhould be my *cloſing Exhortation*, theſe my *laſt Words*, *ſeek the* LORD. And how know you, but this may be the *concluding Night* with ſome of you? You may appear in the *Houſe of* GOD no more for ever. Awakening Thought, how ſhould it rouze you from your preſent Lethargy, and engage you with the utmoſt Seriouſneſs to conſider your State, and to look up to the exalted SAVIOUR for *Repentance and Forgiveneſs of Sins!*

You who have found a Bleſſing accompanying the Word, and felt a Power in it, quickning and ſtirring you up to *ſeek the* LORD: Have you not found him a *gracious* SAVIOUR, an *able*, a *ſuitable* SAVIOUR? Give him all the Glory; and go on your Way rejoicing. It will be Matter of everlaſting Joy and Thankfulneſs to *you and me*, that *hither* GOD brought you, and *proclaimed Deliverance* to your captive Souls. Here you were brought to *ſeek the* LORD. Seek him *ſtill*. Seek him in *every Ordinance*. *Seek*, and you ſhall *find*. You ſhall find him *ſmiling* upon you, *quickning* you to Duty, *ſupporting* you under Difficulties, *ſtanding by you*

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at *Death*, and *welcoming* you to his everlaſting Kingdom. Rejoice, *my dear Friends*, for GOD has called you to *Holineſs*, to *Glory*. Run with Chearfulneſs the Race that is ſet before you, and you ſhall at laſt receive a *Crown which fadeth not away*.——

To you who gave up yourſelves publickly to the LORD *the laſt Year, I would ſpeak a Word*—— Was it not *Love* that ſweetly forced you in? Did not *Love* to JESUS, a *Deſire* of honouring him; did not *Conſcience* and *Duty* all join to bring you to his Table? As you begun, ſo continue——Are you under *Fears* leſt you came *too early*, or leſt you had not that *Fitneſs*, which you think is neceſſary for that Ordinance? Be not diſcouraged, but *ſeek the* LORD, and *you ſhall find him*. The Promiſe is made by one who *cannot lie*, and who *will not deceive*. Have you not found him ſmiling upon your Souls, according to your Expectations? Yet be not afraid. *You* are they that *ſeek him early*, and *you ſhall find him*. He will not diſappoint your Hopes, but though he may *with-hold* the Smiles of his Face, yet he will give you the *End of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls*——Are you afraid of *falling* through this or that Temptation; afraid you ſhall never *hold on to the End?* Don't be diſcouraged. You ſhall find *Grace* and *Glory* too. Your Journey may be tedious, but it will be *ſafe*. You may not reach the Goal *ſo ſoon* as ſome who ſet out with you, but the *Prize is ſure*. The Wilderneſs may be *thorny*; the Way may be *narrow*, but ſee the *Opening*. *Heaven* ſtands at

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the *End* of that ſtrait Path into which you are entered: an *everlaſting*, *Almighty* SAVIOUR ſtands ready to *grant* you every Supply by the Way, and to *receive* you to *himſelf* at laſt. Happy, yea unſpeakably happy are you, *my dear young Friends*; as ſure as you *begun* the Race, ſo ſure ſhall you *finiſh* it to your *everlaſting Joy*.——I know that many of you are often watering your Couch with your Tears; ready to be timorous in your Chriſtian Walk. But, hold on your Way, and let nothing diſhearten you. Take this *Promiſe* in my Text, and let it be *engraven upon the Palms of your Hands*, that it may be *ever before you*. Think of it when you *lie down*, and when you *riſe up*. Think of it under all your *Diſcouragements*; it will animate and ſtrengthen you. *Repeat it* when you are *walking* to the *Houſe* of GOD; it will encourage you with the Hopes of Acceptance and Salvation. *Plead it*, when in your Cloſets you are lifting up your Souls to GOD; it will *enliven* your *Petitions*. Finally, it is a Promiſe ſo peculiarly glorious, and ſo directly ſuited to your Circumſtances, that it ſhould *never be forgotten*. May the LORD open your Eyes, and let you ſee its Beauty and Excellency, and engrave it upon your Hearts, that you may be encouraged and ſupported by it in Life and Death.

I would now ſum up all, and cloſe this Addreſs, by turning what has been ſaid into *Queſtions ſuitable* to the *Characters* that have been mentioned, that you may each examine yourſelves in Matters of ſuch Moment. *Another Year is elapſed*;

no

no Time therefore can be more *ſeaſonable* for an Examination. *Another Year is come*, this then is a freſh Call to look into your Hearts, and to enquire how Matters ſtand. Let me intreat you therefore to ſet apart a ſmall Portion of Time for this Purpoſe. Endeavour to call off your Thoughts from preſent Things, look up to GOD for his Aſſiſtance, and well weigh and conſider the following Queſtions.

Are you of the firſt Sort I mentioned? Then aſk ſuch Queſtions *as theſe.* Is there not a God? ——Is it not *reaſonable* that this GOD ſhould be *worſhipped* by *all* his *Creatures?*——Have *I* been concerned to give him the *Honour* that is his *Due?*——Do I find *real Happineſs* in my *preſent* Principles and Conduct?——Have I not *ſtrove hard* to get over my Convictions?——Muſt I not *acknowledge* a future Reckoning, and then ſtand *ſelf-condemned?*——Is it not *Time* then to attend to everlaſting *Concerns*, and is it not the *higheſt Prudence* to do ſo?

Are you of the *ſecond Sort?*——Theſe Queſtions will be ſuitable——Shall I attend to the *Convictions* of my Conſcience, or to the *Sollicitations* of my Companions? —— If I ſtifle Conſcience will it *never more awake?*—Can my Companions engage to *ſecure* me from the Terrors of the ſecond Death? ——Will the Pleaſures they entice me to the Purſuit of *make up* for the *Loſs* of *Heaven?*——Is not the Chriſtian the *happieſt Perſon* in Life and Death?——

Are you of the *third Sort ?* —— Then put ſuch Queſtions as theſe to your Souls——If I put off the Concerns of Eternity to an hereafter, ſhall I not *then* be more *unfit* to attend to them ? ——Will the Pleaſures that now appear ſo captivating give me *ſolid Happineſs ?*——Is there no *real Pleaſure* in a religious Life ?——May I not *die* before the *Commencement* of another Year ? ——Can I attend to the Concerns of my Soul *too early ?*

Do you belong to the *fourth Sort ?*——Attend to the Propriety of theſe Queſtions——Does real Religion conſiſt in *mere Morality ?* —— May I not be deceiving myſelf with the *Hopes* of the *Hypocrite ?*——Do I *know* what it is to be *born again ?*——

Are you of the *fifth Rank* of young Perſons ? —Make the following Enquiries——Am I *ſenſible* of the Privileges of a religious Deſcent ?——Do not my Parents affectionately *love* me, and *long* for my Salvation ?——Have I *attended* to their Importunities ?——Is not my Heart *yet melted* under their Prayers and Inſtructions ?——Will not my Condemnation be *awful*, if I improve not ſuch Privileges ? —— Shall I *break* their Hearts, *wound* their Souls, and bring their grey Hairs with *Sorrow* to the *Grave ?*——

Are you under *ſerious Impreſſions ?* Enquire as follows——Is there not *Encouragement* for *me* to *ſeek* the LORD ?——Did CHRIST ever *re-*

fuſe

ſuſe Salvation to *thoſe* that *came* to him ?—— Am I not *willing* to receive him as my *All* ?——

Laſtly, With you, to whom I am *more particularly related*, let me leave a few Queſtions, and let me intreat you to attend to them——I am ſpared *another Year*, and what is the *State* of my Soul ?——What are my preſent *Reſolutions* and *Views ?*——Have I ſeen any Thing yet in the Ways of GOD to *captivate* my Heart ?——If GOD ſhould ſuddenly call me out of Time before his Bar, ſhall I not have an *awful Account* to give ?——Have I not *ſtifled* many Convictions the *laſt Year ?*——If you have been engaged to *ſeek the* LORD, or to give up yourſelves to him publickly, then enquire —— Have I any Reaſon to *repent* of my Choice ?——Can I bring up any *ill Report* of the Cauſe of CHRIST ?—— What *Progreſs* have I made in the Chriſtian Life ?——Have I got any Ground over my *Corruptions*, made any Advances in *Knowledge*, or *Love* to my REDEEMER?——Have I not ſufficient *Encouragement* to go on waiting upon GOD ?——Am I not another Year *nearer* the Grave, and therefore *nearer* my compleat Salvation ?——

Thus theſe, or ſuch like Queſtions as theſe, may be proper to put to your Souls ; and, Oh! that GOD would ſet Home what has been ſaid, that many of you may begin the Year with him, chearfully devoting yourſelves to him, that whatever may be the Providences, Afflictions,

or Calamities of the enſuing Year, you may be fitted for them, may honour GOD in Life, and live with him for ever in a better World.——

I would now cloſe all, by a ſhort Addreſs to *Parents and Heads of Families*. As you have the *immediate Inſpection* and Care of thoſe in general, to whom I have been ſpeaking; ſo I would endeavour to impreſs upon your Minds a Senſe of the *Greatneſs* of your Charge, the Neceſſity of Watchfulneſs, Activity, and Seriouſneſs in the Performance of thoſe relative Duties, that regard the Welfare of thoſe under you. It will be of little Significancy for *Miniſters to preach* to young Perſons, if you *deſtroy privately* what they have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh publickly. Let me entreat you then to attend to your Duty, and endeavour by ſuitable Inſtructions, to bring your Families to the ſaving Knowledge of the Goſpel. Can you ſee them *periſhing for lack of Knowledge*, and not lend them the leaſt Aſſiſtance? Are you Profeſſors of Chriſtianity? Do you appear at the *Table of our* LORD; and have you no Religion in your *Houſes?* Have you no Concern for the Souls of your *Children* and *Servants?* Is this *conſiſtent* with your Character? You may blame the Miniſter, and think that GOD is not with him, becauſe you ſee not the young Branches of your Families, ſetting out for Heaven. But, muſt he uſe all the Means, whilſt *you* are abſolutely *careleſs?* Every Sermon you have heard in publick, *preach* over to your Families in private. Labour to open the Scriptures

tures to them, to impreſs them with a Senſe of the Worth of their Souls, and to lead them into an Acquaintance with the Scheme of Salvation. Be often ſpeaking to them in the Language of *Affection*, that ſo you may win upon their tender Minds, and engage them, before they are aware, to give themſelves to GOD. Let the *Lord's-Day*, however, be employed in this important Work. This is certainly a proper Seaſon for religious Inſtructions; don't therefore let *thoſe Evenings* be ſpent *Abroad*, or in Negligence and Sloth at Home; but like Prieſts, in your own Houſes, *call them together*, and let them ſee that you have a real Concern for their everlaſting Welfare.——

Again, *Be concerned, to ſet before them good Examples. Live* every Sermon you hear, that they may ſee that you are really in good Earneſt. *Practiſe* every Duty you exhort them to. *Watch* againſt every Thing that tends to give them unfavourable Thoughts of Religion, harden their Hearts againſt it, or lead them into Formality. You cannot ſure be the *firſt Perſons* that lead them to the *Card-Table*, to the *Play-houſe*, or to *thoſe Pleaſures*, that will prove enſnaring and deſtructive. And yet I fear there are many Heads of Families in *this City*, and in other Places, that ſet their Children and Families theſe *evil Examples*, and would perſuade them *all is right*. Let me aſk you, my Friends, and put it cloſe, how can you *anſwer* it to your own *Conſciences*, to their *Souls*, and to that GOD who will call

call you to an Account ?——I would entreat you to conſider your *Character :* Conſider the *Worth* of their *Souls* ; the *Day of Degeneracy* you are in ; the *low State* of Religion ; and let a Concern for the Honour of CHRIST fire you with Zeal, and put you upon every Attempt to bring thoſe under your Care to the *Knowledge* and *Obedience* of the Goſpel. *Hark*, GOD calls you in his Providence. He is *ſhaking the Earth :* He has viſited other Nations ; and he may ſoon viſit us. See then, and be concerned to get yourſelves and Families, in order to meet the LORD ; and may you be *burning and ſhining Lights* in your reſpective Places, that thoſe around you, *Seeing your good Works, may glorify our Father, who is in Heaven.*

THE END.